

House Resolution 1974

By: Representatives Smith of the 113th, Cheokas of the 134th, Smyre of the 132nd, Porter of the 143rd, Brooks of the 63rd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Requesting that the Capitol Art Standards Commission consider hanging a portrait of the
2 Honorable Griffin Boyette Bell at the capitol; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Honorable Griffin Boyette Bell was one of Georgia's most distinguished
4 public servants, innovative legal minds, and civil rights advocates; and

5 WHEREAS, Judge Bell served as a guardian of this nation's freedom and liberty in the
6 United States Army, valiantly and courageously protecting his fellow Americans during
7 World War II as a major; and

8 WHEREAS, he completed his undergraduate studies at Georgia Southwestern College and
9 went on to graduate cum laude from Mercer University Law School in Macon, Georgia; and

10 WHEREAS, after he was admitted to the Georgia Bar in 1947, Judge Bell practiced in
11 Savannah and Rome, Georgia, before joining the Atlanta law firm of King and Spalding in
12 1953, where he rose to the level of managing partner in 1958; and

13 WHEREAS, Judge Bell began his career as a public servant in 1959 with his honorary
14 position as Chief of Staff to Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver, advising the Governor for
15 over two and a half years before being appointed by President John F. Kennedy in October
16 of 1961 to serve as a United States Circuit Judge on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals; and

17 WHEREAS, during his 15 years on the federal bench, Judge Bell supervised the creation of
18 dozens of school desegregation plans, playing an integral role in defusing racial tensions of
19 the time and paving the way for peaceful desegregation of public schools in Georgia and
20 other states; and

21 WHEREAS, Judge Bell's integrity, professionalism, and sharp legal mind were qualities his
22 childhood neighbor President Jimmy Carter admired, and in 1976, the President nominated
23 this great Georgian for the position of Attorney General for the United States; and

24 WHEREAS, on January 26, 1977, Griffin B. Bell was sworn in as the 72nd United States
25 Attorney General by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger; and

26 WHEREAS, during his tenure as Attorney General, Judge Bell helped rehabilitate the United
27 States Justice Department's severely damaged reputation which was caused by the Watergate
28 scandal of the early 1970's; and

29 WHEREAS, after the conclusion of his term as United States Attorney General, this dean of
30 Georgia lawyers continued his remarkable legal career specializing in conducting internal,
31 page-turning investigations for corporations in legal distress such as E.F. Hutton, after its
32 financial scandal; Exxon, after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska; and Dow Corning, after
33 the company's silicone implants were linked to health risks; and

34 WHEREAS, one of the most important Georgians of the 20th century, Judge Bell was known
35 for his integrity, professionalism, sense of humor, and charm, and the State of Georgia is
36 proud to have been called home by such a respected and accomplished individual; and

37 WHEREAS, a portrait of this trusted and enduring public figure, principled statesman, and
38 strong defender of the First Amendment would be an appropriate addition to the halls of this
39 state's capitol.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
41 the members of this body request that the Capitol Art Standards Commission consider
42 hanging a portrait of the Honorable Griffin Boyette Bell at the capitol.

43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
44 and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the Capitol Art Standards
45 Commission and Clerk of the House of Representatives.